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**City of Salisbury and Salisbury-Rowan Utilities Lend Support to  
Local Food Service Establishments in Efforts to Meet Federal and  
State Grease-Handling Requirements**

*Educational and Incentive Funding Components to Assist Local Businesses with  
Compliance Measures*

Salisbury, NC\_May 21, 2009 – The City of Salisbury and Salisbury-Rowan Utilities (SRU) are taking positive steps to assist local food service establishments (FSE) in their efforts to become compliant with federal and state government mandates regarding grease-handling. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the North Carolina Division of Water Quality (NCDWQ), a division of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), have initiated fats, oils, and grease (FOG) measures in response to an increasing number of sanitary sewer overflows. Wastewater Collection System Permit Number WQCS00019, issued to the city by DENR on May 3, 2004, requires that all FSE operate and maintain a properly-sized grease trap or interceptor per local approved ordinance. SRU staff are working diligently to educate FSE owners and operators regarding conformance to these requirements and to provide information regarding potential funding opportunities linked to early compliance.

Federal and state legislation requires that all permitted North Carolina municipalities, which own and operate sewer collection systems, create and implement a FOG Control Program. The plan must include a FOG educational component for residents and an enforcement policy to which food establishments and commercial food servers must comply. The SRU FOG Control Policy has been developed to comply with federal and state standards and to manage the discharge of fats, oils, and grease in a safe and effective way. The policy was adopted by Salisbury City Council on April 7, 2009. Local establishments currently have three years (by April 7, 2012) to install a grease interceptor or trap to protect sewers against accumulations of fats, oils, and grease.

In support of local FSE and to promote early compliance, the City of Salisbury and Salisbury-Rowan Utilities have created an educational/incentive program. City Manager David Treme shares, "As federal and state regulations require this compliance, we feel it is important to assist our Salisbury food service providers in their efforts to conform; we appreciate the contributions that these food service establishments provide to our local economy. Our SRU FOG support team consists of two dedicated staff members who will assist our food service owners and operators with questions or concerns regarding compliance to these federal and state mandates. In addition, we have created an

incentive program to assist eligible businesses with the associated cost of implementing these required devices. We hope that these businesses will opt for early compliance and take advantage of these available venues of support.” The incentive program provides \$1,500 in funding support to eligible businesses that install an approved grease interceptor or trap within the first year of policy approval (by April 7, 2010). Businesses that install interceptors or traps during the second year are eligible for \$1,000 in support; those installing in the third year are eligible for \$500.

FOG blockages may harm public health, the environment, and increase the operating costs for the owner of the drainage line. Jim Behmer, Director for Salisbury-Rowan Utilities offers, “Under the new policy, existing food service establishments with an interceptor or trap will need to secure a North Carolina licensed plumber, a North Carolina professional engineer, or a North Carolina permitted grease waste hauler to submit a Grease Interceptor/Trap Verification form, verifying the volume of the existing device. Establishments without an interceptor or trap will be required to install an approved device.” Behmer shares that newly approved FOG Control Policy includes the following key elements as required by federal and state requirements:

- New approval process
- New maintenance requirements
- New design criteria
- New responsibilities for food service establishments
- New enforcement and response plan

The policy also includes an approval process for new construction and for existing facilities that are currently without grease interceptors or grease traps. These entities will be required to submit plans and receive approval of these grease inhibitors prior to installation. In addition, newly installed grease interceptors will require a standard maintenance process at a minimum of every ninety days. Grease traps will require standard maintenance once, every thirty days. Furthermore, grease interceptor and grease trap service records are required to remain on-site for a period of three years.

SRU FOG Program Coordinator Aaron Otten is available to answer questions regarding the FOG Control Program. Otten and FOG Inspector Johnny Rogers will begin meeting with owners and managers of food service establishments in the coming months to review the FOG program. Otten explains, “Our goal is to answer any questions that these business owners may have regarding this federally and state mandated program. We will gladly provide resources such as best management practices; grease waste hauler listings, and plumber directories. In addition, we will share information regarding financial incentives available for the installation of approved devices. Together, we can bring these facilities up to the new FOG Control Program standards and become compliant with these government regulations.”

Otten notes that the FOG Program is a two-pronged approach which includes educating both residents and the owners and operators of food service establishments. “In 2008 alone, over 500 sanitary sewer overflows were reported across North Carolina due to FOG accumulation. By educating the public, we are striving to assist the owner of the home or business where FOG has created a back-

up. By reducing FOG, we are also reducing the associated maintenance costs and that saves everybody money.” Otten shares that SRU currently offers educational FOG awareness sessions through the local school system, Earth Day events, and via Access 16 TV. “We continue to find new and exciting ways to educate the public regarding our mission to reduce FOG and to protect public health and the environment.” Individuals with questions pertaining to the FOG Control Policy are encouraged to contact Otten’s office at 704-216-2729 or via email at [aotte@salisburync.gov](mailto:aotte@salisburync.gov). In addition, citizens may review the council approved FOG Control Program online, by visiting [www.salisburync.gov/utilities](http://www.salisburync.gov/utilities).

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